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Via ECFS  
Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

**Re: In the Matter of Petition of USTelecom for Forbearance Pursuant to  
47 U.S.C. Section 160(c); WC Docket No. 18-141; Category 1**

Dear FCC,

I am writing to express how important local broadband providers are to me, for my business and my personal use. More competition, not less, is critical to ensure I have options in services and am shielded from the kind of price increases that would be inevitable without the competition we have today. Earlier this year, I converted my business and home from DSL from Comcast to Gigabit fiber from Sonic Networks, an option that we have solely because Sonic made the investment to build out fiber networks in our Berkeley, CA area.

Further, while I live in the San Francisco Bay Area, I know that in many communities, local providers are the ONLY connections rural communities have to the internet. Dont cut off Rural America!

Last month, Verizon made the shocking decision to throttle broadband service to a fire department battling the huge Mendocino Complex Fire, one of the largest in California history. Even though the department alerted Verizon of the emergency, he said the company did not restore its high-speed wireless service and informed that County Fire would have to switch to a new data plan at more than twice the cost to get the speed restored. Lives and property were lost in this terrible fire. Verizon later said this was an employee mistake. Perhaps, but this is a mistake a local company never would have made.

I urge you to deny the USTelecom petition. The 1996 Telecommunications Act is essential to promote competition, enable fiber deployment and offer better service options for consumers.

Mahesh Patki